

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (currently amended): A system comprising a computer and a control device, wherein the computer executes a plurality of software and the control device connects to the computer,

the control device comprising:

a control that generates operation data in response to operation of the control;

a plurality of data communication ports, each of which is assigned to one of said plurality of software executed on the computer and is a path for transferring the operation data to the computer to control a software assigned to a corresponding data communication port;

a protocol change switch;

a setter that sets a different protocol to each of the plurality of data communication ports by selecting, for each of the plurality of data communication ports, a software among said plurality of software executed on the computer in response to an operation to the protocol change switch by a user;

a port selector that selects one of the plurality of data communication ports;

a converter that converts the operation data in accordance with a protocol set to the selected data communication port; and

a transmitter that transmits the converted operation data to the computer via the selected data communication port, thereby controlling the computer via the software to which the selected data communication port is assigned.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The system according to claim [[1]] 7, wherein the computer is connected to the control device via a physical single cable, and transmission of converted operation data is performed via the cable.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of controlling a computer executing a plurality of software and connecting to a control device, the control device having a control and a plurality of data communication ports, said method comprising:

generating operation data in response to operation of the control;

assigning each of said plurality of communication ports to one of said plurality of software executed on the computer for transferring the operation data to the computer to control a software assigned to a corresponding data communication port;

setting a different protocol to each of the plurality of data communication ports by selecting, for each of the plurality of data communication ports, a software among said plurality of software executed on the computer in response to an operation to a protocol change switch by a user;

selecting one of the plurality of data communication ports;

converting the operation data in accordance with a protocol set to the selected data communication port; and

transmitting the converted operation data to the computer via the selected data communication port, thereby controlling the computer via the software to which the selected data communication port is assigned.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A machine-readable medium containing program instructions executable by a control device for controlling a computer executing a plurality of software and connecting to the control device, the control device having a control and a plurality of data communication ports, said program instructions causing the control device to perform the following steps:

- generating operation data in response to operation of the control;

- assigning each of said plurality of communication ports to one of said plurality of software executed on the computer for transferring the operation data to the computer to control a software assigned to a corresponding data communication port;

- setting a different protocol to each of the plurality of data communication ports by selecting, for each of the plurality of data communication ports, a software among said plurality of software executed on the computer in response to an operation to a protocol change switch by a user;

- selecting one of the plurality of data communication ports;

- converting the operation data in accordance with a protocol set to the selected data communication port; and

- transmitting the converted operation data to the computer via the selected data communication port, thereby controlling the computer via the software to which the selected data communication port is assigned.